



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

# The BOTTOM LINE

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## Higher Pay for Information Technology Workers

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has established higher rates of basic pay for entry- and developmental-level computer specialists (0334), computer engineers (0854), and computer scientists (1550) covered by the General Schedule (GS) pay system throughout the Federal Government. The purpose of these higher rates of pay is to help agencies address significant problems in recruiting information technology (IT) workers in today's highly competitive IT labor market. The new higher rates of pay will become effective for NCR employees serviced by the HECSA CPAC, 14 January 2001. The combined effect of these new higher pay rates and the anticipated across-the-board GS pay increase will produce overall net pay increases ranging from about 7 to 33 percent for most affected employees, depending on grade level. More information on the special salary rate may be obtained from the OPM web site at [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).

**DRAFT**

*Special Salary Rate Table Number 999C  
Certain Information Technology Employees  
Washington-Baltimore, DC - MD - VA - WV*

GRADE	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8	STEP 9	STEP 10	STEP INTERVAL
5	30,726	31,751	32,775	33,800	34,825	35,850	36,875	37,899	38,924	39,949	Varies
7	36,700	37,923	39,146	40,369	41,592	42,815	44,038	45,261	46,485	47,708	Varies
9	43,230	44,671	46,111	47,551	48,992	50,432	51,873	53,313	54,753	56,194	Varies
11	48,283	49,892	51,502	53,111	54,720	56,329	57,938	59,548	61,157	62,766	Varies
12	55,456	57,305	59,153	61,001	62,849	64,697	66,545	68,393	70,241	72,089	Varies
13*	60,212	62,220	64,227	66,235	68,243	70,250	72,258	74,265	76,273	78,281	Varies

\*At GS-13, the IT special rates are lower than the corresponding locality pay rates in each locality pay area. Therefore, employees will receive the higher locality pay rates in all cases. Includes 2.7% pay increase effective 14 January 2001.

Source: OPM Memorandum dated Nov 3, 2000.

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## Funding for Permanent Change of Station (PCS)

by Roger Petercsak

In reviewing the proposed FY94 HQUSACE Operating Budget, the former Working Resource Management Committee (WRMC) recommended, and the Chief of

Staff approved an internal policy on funding of PCS costs which is still in effect today. A “reminder” of that policy is appropriate since the number of PCS actions have started to increase this fiscal year.

This policy established that within HQUSACE, PCS costs for **Executive Direction and**

**Management (ED&M)** positions would be funded for Real Estate Expenses, Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE) for 60 days only, Miscellaneous Expenses, Movement and Storage of Household Goods, and Travel and Per Diem Expenses. These funds are transferred from the PCS Reserve account to the Operating account of the gaining HQ Element when needed for obligation. As a cost saving measure, the WRMC decided that the Directorates and Separate Offices would have to absorb all costs related to house hunting trips, extensions of TQSE beyond 60 days, and Relocation Services (except for SES positions). This policy encouraged managers to carefully consider whether to authorize these additional expenses.

PCS costs for Program/Reimbursable positions are funded by the applicable fund

source, as authorized by the program manager.

## HECSA Support for HQUSACE Program Accounts

by Linda J. Morris

A new duty was passed on to the Humphreys Engineer Center Support Activity (HECSA) to provide support to the many Program/Reimbursable Accounts managed at the Headquarters U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQUSACE). As the Program Account Liaison, I have visited several of the program managers in the Headquarters to learn about their programs and hopefully to give them some beneficial information to assist them in managing their programs in the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS). I distribute monthly Fund Status Reports that indicate funds received in the Annual Funding Program (AFP) and Allocation by CEFMS Work Item for each program. I also prepare an Obligation and Expenditure Report that is distributed quarterly.

As many of you probably know by now there have been some procedural changes primarily affecting tracking and distribution of funds. In recent years the distribution of program funds in the HQUSACE CEFMS database was prepared by the Directorate of Resource Management (CERM) with input from the program managers. That function has been moved to the HECSA Resource Management Office, Programs and Budget Branch (CEHEC-RM-B). The plan was to use the HQUSACE Program Accounts Program and Budget Guidance (PBG) combined with input from each program manager to distribute those funds retained in the HQUSACE CEFMS database for the year. However, in the absence of receiving the HQUSACE PBG, I used other means to get this information. I have asked for and received from most

program managers an obligation plan for FY01 and have used this information as a tool to distribute budget authority and allocation as it is received on a Funding Authorization Document (FAD) from CERM.

Most HQUSACE data calls for General Expenses (GE) Executive Direction and Management (ED&M) and Operations and Maintenance, Army (OMA) Program Accounts now come through this office. There will be times, such as the upcoming Mid-Year Review and FY02/03 Budget Submission that will require input from the program managers to answer these data calls. In addition, I will be placing emphasis on reviewing execution and unliquidated obligations throughout the year. The HECSA Resource Management Office (CEHEC-RM) is especially concerned about cleaning up some of the older accounts and canceling year appropriations. I also expect to get more involved with the Reimbursable Accounts this fiscal year as they are included in the overall budget submissions which will provide the Program Budget Advisory Committees (PBAC) a more accurate picture of all funds received and utilized in the HQUSACE CEFMS database.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss any problems you're having or have any questions or suggestions, please call me at (703) 428-6122 or contact me by e-mail at: [Linda.J.Morris@HQ02.usace.army.mil](mailto:Linda.J.Morris@HQ02.usace.army.mil).

### *Unliquidated Obligation(s) Review (ULO Review) and Canceling Appropriations*

by Thomas McQuillen

**I**n the last article on this subject I described the Army's Joint Reconciliation Program, and what it seeks to achieve. In this iteration, I will relate new guidance that the

program has issued, along with some tips on how to achieve the program's goals.

Our goal, again for FY 2001, is to reach a zero obligated balance in all canceling appropriations by the end of the third

quarter, 30 June 2001.



challenged to also reduce 50% of the obligated balance in appropriations that will cancel at the end of Fiscal Year 2002. To accomplish this, we must closely review obligations in 1996 and 1997 Operation and Maintenance appropriations, (for Army, 2162020 and 2172020, for DoD, 9760100 and 9770100), 1995 and 1996 Research and Development appropriations (for Army, 2152040 and 2162040, for DoD, 9750400 and 9760400), 1994 and 1995 Procurement appropriations (for Army, 214203\* and 215203\*, where the \* can vary depending on the type of procurement), and 1992 and 1993 Military Construction appropriations (2122050 and 2132050 for Army, 9720500 and 9730500 for DoD.)

Although to the average taxpayer, 5+ years is an unacceptably long period of time for someone who is owed money to not render a bill, care must be taken when reviewing these "old" obligations so that the law is not violated. What we mean by that is that there are three ways in which we can create an antideficiency violation through careless deobligation of a canceling obligation. All three of the problem situations may occur if we cancel an obligation that was still valid, and the vendor renders a bill after the appropriation has cancelled.

First, if we cancel an obligation, and then a bill is rendered that is greater than the amount that was left in the appropriation

when it cancelled, we have a violation. For example, say we had an obligation for \$100, and we deobligated it, and that was the only amount left in the appropriation when it was cancelled, and the vendor sends a bill for \$150, which is legally due and payable, we are in violation. Second, if the bill for \$150 exceeds one percent of the current appropriation, we have a violation. Finally, if the total amount of cancelled obligation payments exceeds \$4,000,000 and permission is not granted by the head of the agency, or if the total exceeds \$25,000,000 and permission from the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives is not obtained, we have a violation.

For most of the obligations which are the subject of our ULO reviews, none of these possible violations should present a problem, but still, care should be taken, vendors, suppliers, performing activities and contracting offices should be contacted before deobligations take place. Despite all of this, we should be able to achieve the 30 June and 30 September goals for most of the canceling obligations we are responsible for reviewing are between government agencies, with whom we should be maintaining contact for the duration of the work. Again, please let's do our very best to reach the Army goals this year!

### Transit Subsidy

by Patricia C. Ackerman

**W**ithin the National Capital Region (NCR), the Transit Subsidy became effective on 1 October 2000. The Transit Subsidy Program provides up to \$65.00 per month to eligible federal employees. To be eligible you must be a civilian, military or NAF employee paid and employed by the Department of Defense (DoD) and work in the NCR. The program will reimburse for your actual cost of commuting on approved

mass transportation, excluding the price of parking, up to a maximum of \$65.00 per month. The application can be found at the following web site:

<http://www.dtic.mil/ref/html/Application1.html>.

The subsidy is paid in Metrocheks. Metrocheks can not be converted to cash. Metrocheks are accepted by all Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) approved providers of mass transportation.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is



managing the distribution of the Transit Subsidy for the DoD. The Headquarters US Army Corps of Engineers (HQUSACE) was fortunate to have the GAO Building designated as a distribution point. The first distribution at the GAO Building was made on 28

September. The

DOT made over 250 distributions that day to Corps employees. This first distribution was for the month of October only. The first distribution at Ft. Belvoir was made on Wednesday, 27 September, at the SOSA Community Center, Conference Room 1. On 23 October, the DOT made its second distribution at Ft. Belvoir and on 26 October at the GAO Building. This distribution was for three months; November, December and January. Regular distributions, which cover a period of three months, are scheduled for January, April, July and October each year. Regular distributions at the GAO Building are scheduled to be on the Thursday of the last full week of the month. Regular distributions at Ft. Belvoir are scheduled to be on the Wednesday of the last full week of the month. This would



equate to 25 January, 26 April, 26 July and 25 October for the GAO Building and 24 January, 25 April, 25 July and 24 October at Ft. Belvoir. Distributions in the GAO Building are made in room 3J17.

If you miss a regular distribution date you should go to the DOD Pass Office in the Pentagon, room 2E1084 adjacent to the metro entrance as soon as possible weekdays between 0900 and 1600 hours. The subsidy can not be paid in arrears. What this means to you is that if you normally spend only \$65.00 per month on approved mass transportation, this amount will be prorated over a month time. If you do not go to the Pentagon Parking Office and wait for the makeup distribution date, you would only be entitled to less than half of the subsidy. If your normal cost of mass transportation is \$200.00 per month and you waited till the makeup distribution date, you would still be entitled to the full \$65.00.

The DOT will also provide a makeup distribution date on the third Tuesday of February, March, May, June, August, September, November and December. These distribution dates are intended for new employees or employees that have recently applied for the Transit Subsidy. It is not intended for those that missed a regularly scheduled transit subsidy distribution.

If an employee is participating in the program, has received a subsidy and decides to discontinue participation in the program they may owe back a portion of the subsidy they received. To dis-enroll in the program, complete a new application. Check the box for "Dis-enrolling," complete your name, organization (COE) and the last four digits of your social security number. If you also owe back a portion of the last subsidy you received, add a note at the bottom of the application indicating that you owe back and specify where and when you plan to return the unused Metrocheks. Fax

the form to DOT at the number indicated at the top of the application. The Metrocheks can be returned either on the next date that DOT is making distributions in the GAO Building, Fort Belvoir or any day at the Pentagon Parking Office.

### *Estimated Earnings During Military Service for Civilian Retirement Purpose*

**T**here are many former military members employed as civilians within the National Capital Region. One of your retirement options as a civilian is to "buy back" your military



service time to be counted as part of your civil service retirement. DFAS has provided guidance on this option as follows.

### ***WHAT ARE ESTIMATED EARNINGS?***

For a former military member to have their service time considered for their civil service retirement they have to "buy back" that time. In order to "buy back" military service time for civil service retirement, former military members are required to get their estimated earnings from the appropriate DFAS Center. Below are instructions on how to do this.

Use a separate request for each branch of service. Attach DD 214 or equivalent and any available records of pay or promotions to the Request for Earnings during Military Service form provided by the civilian personnel office. Individuals that do not have a DD 214 or equivalent should get an SF 180 from the personnel office and have their service verified before forwarding the request form to the pay center. The pay

center cannot provide estimated earnings unless verification of service is attached. Send or fax the Request for Earnings during Military Service form to the appropriate address/fax number shown below:

### **ARMY**

DFAS-INDIANAPOLIS CENTER  
ATTN: DFAS-IN/FJESR  
8899 East 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46249-0875  
PHONE: (317) 510-2800  
FAX: (317) 510-5575

### **AIR FORCE**

DFAS-DENVER CENTER  
ATTN: DFAS-DE/FJY  
6760 E. Irvington Place  
Denver, CO 80279-3000  
PHONE: (303) 676-7408  
FAX: (303) 676-6218

### **COAST GUARD PAY & PERSONNEL CENTER**

444 S.E. Quincy Street  
Topeka, KS 66683-3591  
PHONE: (785) 357-3570  
FAX: (785) 295-2544

### **HQ ARPC/FMFP**

PHONE: 1-(800) 525-0102, x6211/6727

### **AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

**Air National Guard Readiness Center**  
ANGRC/FMF  
3500 Fetchet Avenue  
Andrews AFB, MD 20762-5157

### **NAVY**

DFAS-CLEVELAND CENTER  
ATTN: DFAS-CL/FMCS  
1240 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cleveland, OH 44199-2055  
PHONE: (216) 522-6545  
FAX: (216) 522-6924

### **MARINES**

DFAS-KANSAS CITY CENTER

ATTN: DFAS-KC/FBL  
1500 E. 95<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, MO 64197  
PHONE: (816) 926-7652  
FAX: (816) 926-7648

### **PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**

**Div. of Commissioned Personnel  
Compensation Branch**  
Parklawn Bldg., Rm. 4-50  
5600 Fisher's Land  
Rockville, MD 20857  
PHONE: (301) 594-2693  
FAX: (301) 594-2711

### **AIR FORCE RESERVE**

HQ AFRES/ACFM  
Robins AFB, GA 31098-6001  
PHONE: (912) 327-1436

### **NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA)**

NOAA Commissioned Personnel Center  
1315 East-West Highway, Rm: 12100  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282

### **The ADA and You!**

by Thomas McQuillen



**T**his article is about the old “ADA,” not the Americans with Disabilities Act!

There are four main laws in Title 31 (Money and Finance) United States Code (U.S.C.), that can potentially lead to Antideficiency Act (ADA) violations. The first is within Section 1301, which is commonly called the “purpose” statute. Next we have Section

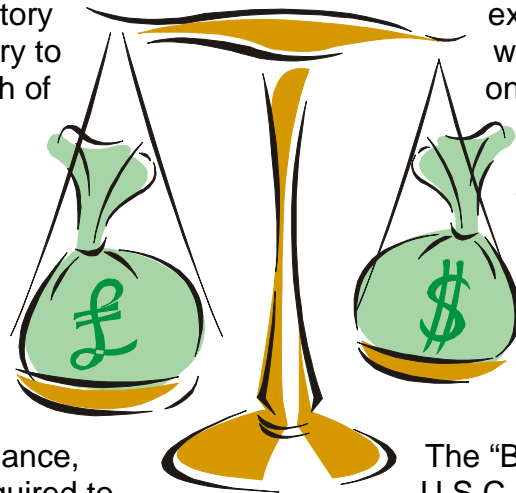
1341, commonly called the antideficiency, or “amount” statute. Then there is Section 1502, commonly called the “Bona Fide Needs Rule,” and finally, Section 1517 which is designed to control payments from the Treasury (called “outlays”) through apportionment control, which limits the amount that can be obligated by quarters of the fiscal year. Collectively these four statutes serve to protect us as U.S. taxpayers from wrongdoing by us as agents/employees of the U.S. Government. Rather than give the statutory description of each, I will try to describe for you what each of these laws mean in layman’s terms.

The “purpose” statute (31 U.S.C. § 1301) may seem obvious, that we are only to spend the dollars provided in a given appropriation, such as Operation and Maintenance, Army (OMA) for things required to operate and maintain the Army. Unfortunately, making the determination as to the purpose of a particular purchase is not always this simple. For example, we may be looking at a Purchase Request and Commitment (PR&C) for obtaining a weapon to outfit a tank. On the surface, some of us may think that this is the correct purpose for our OMA dollars, because how are you going to operate and maintain an Army without weapons on that tank? Well, we are going to do it with another appropriation, called Procurement of Weapons and Tracked Combat Vehicles, Army!

The “antideficiency” or “amount” statute (31 U.S.C. § 1341) may seem patently obvious; however, we have seen instances where, due to the timing of transactions, “earmarks” or “ceilings” in appropriation or authorization acts, or keyboarding errors, amounts available are exceeded. For

example, say we wish to purchase a new high-tech laser color copier/fax/printer using our OMA dollars, and the price tag is a stunning \$15,000, but we key it in as \$1,500. Let’s also say that no one notices this until the vendor sends the invoice for \$15,000. When we try to increase the obligation by \$13,500 so that the invoice can be paid, there are not enough funds available to do this. Do we have an ADA violation? Again, this determination is not so simple... for example; did we only exceed a CEFMS work item where there are the same funds on other work items that can be moved? Or did we really exceed the appropriation? In this example, as long as the funds were available continuously from the time the mistake was made, until it is corrected, no violation has occurred.

The “Bona Fide Needs Rule” (31 U.S.C. § 1502) has been made more reasonable in recent years through legislation that first relaxed time restrictions on obligations for rental or maintenance of tools and facilities (in 1987), and further when restrictions related to “severable services” were eliminated (in 1998). Formerly, we needed to be extremely careful about how our limited year funds were used, and seldom could we enter into obligations that extended beyond the end of the fiscal year. The recent changes mentioned above have streamlined this section to asking a relatively simple question: Is this object a necessity of this fiscal year? Unfortunately, the answer to that question may not be as simple. For example, say one of our customers has obtained an appropriation for us to build new barracks. During the construction, and unfortunately, also near the end of a fiscal year, the customer asks us (with an accompanying MIPR) to purchase a personal computer for each bunk, using



their about to expire OMA dollars. Should we accept this MIPR? Will these PCs be a necessity of the current fiscal year? OK, so this one was simpler than the other two examples... just keep in mind that despite the changes that have relaxed the Bona Fide Needs Rule, it still exists.

Finally, 31 U.S.C. § 1517, which controls the amount available for obligation by fiscal year quarter, is handled a little differently for our Military Appropriations than it is for our Civil Works Appropriations. With regard to the Military dollars, apportionment is controlled on the Fund Authorization Document (FAD) quarterly. Our Civil Apportionment is not apparent on our Civil FADs, but is retained at HQUSACE. Is it possible to breach these quarterly limits? Yes, it is, and most easily at the beginning of a new fiscal year. How? By forgetting that any commitments that are carried over from the old fiscal year into the new are using the new fiscal year's apportionment, not last year's! Keeping this in mind keeps us out of trouble. Another avenue for keeping us out of trouble is your friendly fiscal expert in the HECSA Finance and Accounting Branch. If you are experiencing uncertainty, please give us a call!

## The Quipster's Corner

FACED WITH SO MANY  
**"CHOICES"**  
BUDGETING IS SO MUCH  
FUN BECAUSE:



WHEN FACED WITH A **20** - YEAR THREAT,  
THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS WITH A **15** - YEAR PLAN  
IN A **6** - YEAR DEFENSE PROGRAM,  
MANAGED BY **3** - YEAR PERSONNEL,  
ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP A **2** - YEAR BUDGET,  
WHICH IN REALITY IS FUNDED BY A **1** - YEAR APPROPRIATION,  
WHICH IS TYPICALLY **4-6** MONTHS LATE,  
ACTUALLY FORMULATED OVER A **3** - DAY WEEKEND  
AND APPROVED IN A **1** - HOUR DECISION BRIEFING!!!



## Helpful Web Sites

### **DFAS**

<http://www.asafm.army.mil/dfas>

### **Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller**

<http://www.asafm.army.mil/homepg.htm>

### **Garnishments**

<http://www.dfas.mil/money/garnish>

### **Travel Policy and Procedures**

<http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/>

### **JTR & JFTR Joint Travel Regulation and Joint Federal Travel Regulation**

<http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/trvlregs.html>

### **Per Diem Rates – Query**

<http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/pdrates.html>

### **Reengineered Travel**

<http://www.dtic.mil/travelink/>

### **USACE Finance Center**

<http://www.fc.usace.army.mil/>

### **Comptroller General Decisions**

<http://www.gao.gov/decisions/decision.htm>

### **GSA Home Page**

<http://www.gsa.gov/>

### **GSA Value Lodging**

<http://www.gsa.gov/regions/r9/travel/>

### **HECSA Finance & Accounting Branch**

<http://www.hecsa.usace.army.mil/homepage/Transfer.htm>

### **Approved Air Carriers**

<http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/celd/trans/sepx996.htm>

### **GSA Federal Travel Regulation - click on Travel Management**

<http://www.policyworks.gov/>

### **Social Security Administration**

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

### **TSP**

<http://www.tsp.gov/>

### **CEFMS Business Process Guide for HQUSACE**

<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/cefms/>

### **Hotel Tax Exempt Forms**

<http://www.wes.army.mil/SSE/travel/taxexemp.htm>

### **Local NCR Transit Subsidy Information**

<http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/trans/Local/main.htm>

### **Transit Subsidy Application Form**

<http://www.dtic.mil/ref/html/Application1.html>

